

REMARKS

In paragraph 2 of the final Action, claims 1, 2 and 7-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. In view of the rejection, claim terminology has been amended to correspond with that of the specification.

In paragraph 4 of the final Action, claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Futamura. In paragraph 5 of the final Action, claims 1-3, 7, 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Schadow. In paragraph 6 of the Action, claims 9 and 10 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph and to include the limitations.

In view of the rejections, claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 7, and claim 7 has been cancelled. Since claim 8 was not rejected by the prior art references, claim 8 has been amended to independent form. Claim 10 has been amended to independent form. Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to depend from claim 8.

In claim 1, as explained above, the subject matter of claim 7 has been incorporated. Since Futamura was applied only to claims 1-6, difference of claim 1 now amended with respect to Futamura is not explained. Here, difference of claim 1 with respect to Schadow is explained.

In Schadow, a lower switch shown in Fig. 2 has a curved slot 17 in a cover plate 2, a heart-shaped detent slot in a slider 5 slidably situated in a housing 1, and a spring 8 situated between the housing 1 and a pushbutton 4 of the slider 5. A U-shaped part 12 includes a limb 12a passing through the slot 17 and engaging the heart-shaped detent slot, and a limb 12b pivotally attached to the cover plate 2 and the housing 1. The pushbutton 4 can be moved into a pushed-in position and a pushed-out position by the U-shaped part 12 and the heart-shaped detent slot. Other embodiments shown in Figs. 3-8 have the similar structure.

The latch device in claim 1 includes a push-push type lock mechanism disposed in the housing for locking and unlocking the movable member inside the housing. The push-push type lock

mechanism is similar to the heart-shaped detent slot and the U-shaped part in Schadow.

However, the lock mechanism of the invention includes the first lock members disposed on the front and back surfaces of the movable member symmetrically with respect to a center plane between the front and back surfaces of the movable member, and the second lock members situated at sides of the housing facing the first lock members and locking and unlocking with the first lock members. Namely, two first and second lock members are arranged symmetrically on the front and back surfaces. In Schadow, only one heart-shaped detent slot is formed on one side of the slider.

In this respect, since Schadow has the heart-shaped detent slot on one side of the slider 5, Schadow discloses the structure similar to Japanese Utility Model Publication No. 7-14062 disclosed in the IDS filed in the Patent Office and acknowledged by the Examiner.

In regard to the conventional structure of Publication No. 7-14062 (same as Schadow), as explained in paragraph 0003 of the specification, if the lock mechanism is provided only on one side, strength of locking the movable member is not strong. In order to improve the problem, the first lock members are provided on the front and back surfaces. Schadow does not disclose this structure.

In addition, in the present invention, the second lock members are integrally formed to have a C-shape with ends engaging the first lock members. Accordingly, the number of the parts can be reduced, and the assembly can be made easily. Schadow does not have this structure.

A rejection based on 35 U.S.C. 102 requires every element of the claim to be included in the reference, either directly or inherently. However, two first lock members and second lock members in the form of C-shape are not included in Schadow. Claim 1 of the invention is not anticipated by Schadow.

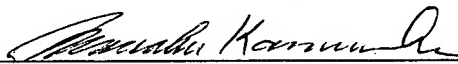
Claim 10 contains the structure as explained in claim 1.

As explained above, the cited reference does not disclose the features of the invention. The application is patentable over the cited reference.

Reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

HAUPTMAN KANESAKA BERNER
PATENT AGENTS, LLP

by 
Manabu Kanesaka
Reg. No. 31,467
Agent for Applicants

1700 Diagonal Road, Suite 310
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 519-9785